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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; FIRE IN CALIFORNIA; PLAN MEXICO; VATICAN
AND IRAN; 10/24/07

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Leading international stories today include the fire in California; implications of Plan Mexico; and a Vatican member supporting Iran's right to "a peaceful use of nuclear energy."

12. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Evacuees"

Hinde Pomeranec, international columnist of leading "Clarn," writes (10/24) "Even though they are not enjoying themselves, they do not feel like second-rate citizens. The football stadium in which they are staying is not a pestilent oven like the New Orleans Superdome, where tens of thousands tolerated amazing survival tests when hurricane Katrina swept their houses in 2005."

"San Diego evacuees watch TV, have good servings of food and are visited by live music bands."

"US social policies seem to be class-based, and the Western coast 'is worth' much more than the South."

- "The Mexico Plan arrives at Capitol Hill"

Gerardo Albarrn de Alba, left-of-center "Pgina 12's" Mexico-based correspondent, writes (10/24) "Plan Mexico has a new name: 'The Merida Initiative,' which is a euphemism for the most ambitious anti-drug cooperation program apart from Plan Colombia..."

"Last Monday, US President George Bush publicly requested funds from Congress to intervene in Mexico, although he did so during a ceremony at the White House aimed at reinforcing the military invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan."

"The US will contribute a total amount of 1.4 billion dollars in 'aid' for Mexico for the next three years, and the Caldersn administration announced it would invest seven billion dollars, although it made clear that it may still not use those funds because they need to be authorized by the Mexican Congress."

"Some PRI and PRD lawmakers believe the Plan Mexico poses a threat to sovereignty. FM Patricia Espinosa clarified that the program will neither include the intervention of corporations or private consultants nor that of US troops or agents in Mexico. Additionally, the Mexican FM said that negotiations are related to state-of-the-art technology, training and equipment in three areas - the fight against drugs and terrorism and border management; public security and administration of justice; and institutional strengthening and law enforcement."

"Nevertheless, the 'Dallas Morning News' newspaper revealed that the Plan Mexico could include the participation of US private military contractors in training Mexican troops in new technologies and equipment, which was denied by FM Patricia Espinosa. The truth is that some US corporations started to recruit mercenaries to train Mexican police officers and military."

- "A cardinal supports Iran's nuclear program"

Julio Algaaraz, leading "Clarn's" Rome-based correspondent, writes (10/24) "Influential Cardinal Renato Martino, one of the Pope's 'ministers' having most experience on international issues, said yesterday in Naples that Iran has the right 'to the peaceful use of nuclear development,' while here in Rome Javier Solana, EU foreign policy chief, said that they had a 'constructive dialogue' with two Tehran negotiators..."

"For his part, former US secretary of State Colin Powell said during a seminar in Milan that 'war is not the solution' and that the Iran crisis should be solved through 'the tools of diplomacy.'"

"... The climate was exacerbated when it was made public that Iranian President (Mahmoud) Ahmadinejad moved up his return from a two-day visit to Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia, for 'domestic policy' reasons."

"... Cardinal Renato Martino, head of the Vatican Council for Justice and Peace, caused surprise in Naples by setting a positive Vatican position on Iran at a key moment by stressing that Tehran has the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy."

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